

# *Begin Your Homeschooling Journey*

## **Before you start:**

### **A Quick Look at Your Own Experiences**

If the information in this book is to be useful to you, it's important that you can see how it relates to your own experiences. Here is a short questionnaire to help start that process.

Write down on a blank sheet of paper or, better yet, in a notebook:

1. At least three things you are good at doing. These could be anything: reading, sewing clothes, balancing a checkbook, growing plants, crafts, getting along with people, driving safely, writing, home decorating, playing with children, hiking, sailing, fishing, drawing, algebra, etc.
2. At least three things that you love doing.
3. At least three things you are not good at doing.
4. At least three things you don't like to do.
5. Where or from whom you learned each thing.

### ***Ponder Point:***

What conclusions can you draw from your answers?

## **From Chapter 3: What Next?**

### **Let's Go Treasure Hunting: The Questionnaires**

#### **About Your Children**

Ideally, you will write out your own answers to these questions in a notebook to which you can refer and add to later and then have each of your children answer them. Set up a private space and assure your children that their answers will be between you and them. Help as needed with

understanding the questions or asking other questions to get full answers, but don't evaluate or invalidate the answers or comment on them. Your role is to make it safe for your children to answer honestly. If you think you can't do this or that your children may not be completely frank with you, have someone else do it for you.

For you to answer and then have your child answer them, using his or her name for "your child":

### ***Family***

1. Who in your family does your child like to spend time with the most? Why?
2. Is there anyone in your family your child doesn't like to spend time with? Why?
3. Does your child have a favorite aunt? Why is she the favorite?
4. Does your child have a favorite uncle? Why is he the favorite?
5. Other supportive adults? How are they supportive?

### ***School/education***

1. How does your child like school? (If he is too young for school, substitute "being taught" for "school.")
2. What does your child like best about it? Least?
3. What do you think would have to change for your child to like it more?
4. What is your child's hardest subject? Why? Easiest subject?
5. What is your child's least favorite subject? Favorite?
6. How well does your child feel he is doing in reading (speed and comprehension), math, and language (spelling and grammar)?
7. For the hardest subjects, why does your child feel he is having problems?

### ***Life***

1. What are your child's hobbies? What would she like to do with her time?
2. What would your child like to know more about?
3. What would your child like to learn to do?
4. What would be a perfect week from your perspective? From your child's perspective?
5. What are your goals for your child? What are her goals for herself?
6. If your child could change anything about her life, what would it be?
7. Who are your child's heroes? Her biggest fan? Her harshest critic?

8. What kind of person would your child like to be? What kind of person would you like her to be?
9. Do you feel your child is becoming more that kind of person as a result of school?
10. Is there something you feel your child would like to tell you, but doesn't feel safe doing so?

***Ponder Points:***

1. Compare your answers with your child's. Did you learn anything about your child that you didn't know?
2. Were any of the answers your child gave a surprise to you? How do you feel about his/her responses?

**Your Beliefs about Children and Learning**

1. If given a choice, do children want to learn new things? What have you observed that supports this view?
2. Do you want to learn new things? Why or why not?
3. Is it important to have your own reason to learn something before setting out to learn it? Or is it better to have someone else tell you what you should learn? Compare things you've learned on your own with things others decided you should learn. What do you notice?
4. What makes learning easy? Hard? Useful? Useless? Interesting? Boring? Try to think of examples from your own life.
5. How important is it to you to not stand out as different?
6. How important is it to you to have the same knowledge and skills as others your age? How important is it for children to have the same knowledge as their age-mates?
7. Do you trust children? Do you think they are eager to follow good role models?
8. Or do you think they are naughty and manipulative? How does your belief either way affect how you treat them? How might your beliefs and treatment affect how they act?

**Your Abilities and Interests**

1. Write down some things you are interested in learning more about or learning how to do. List some ways you might learn about these.
2. Go over your child's answers in her self-evaluation and comb through them for anything that she wants to learn more about or learn how to do. Also, consider things like who her heroes are—whatever field the hero is in is an opportunity for knowledge. Even an answer describing a perfect week, “Every day at the beach,” could be useful for all sorts of education: marine biology, weather, sculpture, and engineering sand castles, etc. Make a list of your answers.
3. What are some things you love to do that you would like to share with your child? Add those to your list.
4. Do you have friends or relatives with skills, trades, or knowledge that you don't have? Add them to your list.
5. Would any of the items on your list involve reading, writing, or math? If not, which is quite unlikely, how might you use the list to give your children practice in these areas?

***Ponder Points:***

1. What thoughts do you have about your list? How would you feel if your child learned most of what is on the list?
2. What holes are there in making it a balanced curriculum?
3. How might you fill those?

**Your Personal Resources for Homeschooling**

1. If both you and your child's other parent were working, would you be able to arrange your schedules or sacrifice some income so that one or both of you could homeschool your child(ren)?
2. If you need both incomes, are there other ways you can make it work? Tutors? Co-ops? Could you bring your child to work with you? Could relatives help? Is your child old enough to be left home alone to work on his own?
3. Do you already know homeschool leaders/groups in your area who offer support and connection with like-minded families?<sup>i</sup>

4. Do you enjoy your children's company?
5. How much structure does each of your children need? Does it vary? What makes it different from one time to another?
6. Are you willing to respond flexibly to the changing needs of your children?
7. Are you ready for some of the most fun, rewarding, and important work you will ever do?